



# Sector showcase: Regeneration

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# Introduction

Approaches to regeneration have changed significantly since 2008. Following the economic downturn tried and tested practices became financially unviable and much regeneration activity ceased. After the 2010 general election, the coalition government was sceptical about nationally backed, capital intensive regeneration schemes and ended a number of specific programmes which targeted the country's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

However regeneration is now very much back on the political agenda, following the government's recent announcement that they will make £140m of loan funding available to kick-start the transformation of 100 estates.

We have recently published research on a '[regeneration revival](#)' with Poplar HARCA and the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR) at Sheffield Hallam University. Our research highlighted a number of examples of successful regeneration and showed that:

- investing in housing-led regeneration provides a good return, and that a mix of public and private investment could help to get more schemes off the ground
- kick-starting an increase in regeneration could deliver more of the homes we badly need. Some of the case studies involved in our research were bringing brownfield sites not previously used for housing into use, while others were increasing the density of existing residential areas to deliver a net increase in homes overall
- understanding the local context and the needs and aspirations of the existing community is vital to getting regeneration right. In particular the mix of different housing options which are ultimately provided needs to be determined by local need, meaning that there will still be a need to retain affordable rented options alongside affordable and outright home ownership.

This document is intended for housing professionals. It focuses on the case studies involved in our previous research and aims to highlight their work and to explore the factors which have enabled them to be successful.

## Ingredients for success

Although approaches vary substantially from one location to another, there are a number of common challenges that often need to be overcome in order to deliver a successful approach to regeneration. We have grouped these under three broad themes:

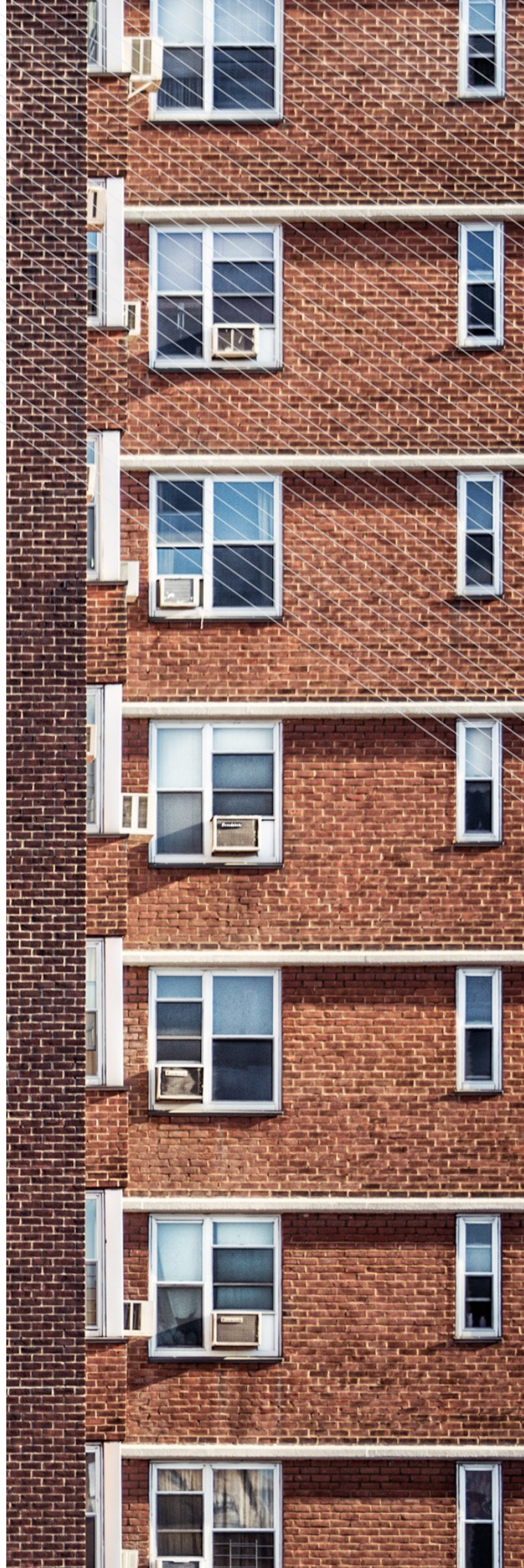
**Local leadership and vision:** Successful regeneration always involves partnership working between a number of organisations at a local level. It's therefore vital to build relationships and to create forums for organisations to agree, and then collaborate on delivering, a shared vision for the area. The exact nature of these, the organisations involved and the specific roles of individual partners vary significantly from area to area, but whatever approach you take in your area needs to deliver effective local leadership to get regeneration activity off the ground.

Housing has a substantial role to play in delivering successful regeneration and housing organisations are often well placed to take the lead in working with the local community and in developing and driving forward a vision for the area. However in many cases investment in other aspects of the local infrastructure is also vital in order to make regeneration viable. A joined up approach that makes the links, at a local level, between housing and areas such as transport can therefore have significant benefits.

**Community engagement:** Gaining local support for change is often a significant challenge. While attracting new people into the area is often a legitimate objective, it's vital that regeneration activity brings benefits for existing residents. Engaging with the local community and enabling them to take some ownership of plans is challenging and can be very labour intensive but it is also a hallmark of successful schemes.

**Funding:** Financial concerns can also pose a significant obstacle to getting planned regeneration activity off the ground. The nature of the challenge varies significantly depending on the area. In some parts of the country low land values can make it difficult for housing providers to generate sufficient returns from things like building new homes for outright and shared ownership to cover their costs. In others high up-front costs from, for example, buying land and owner-occupied homes can create cash-flow difficulties, even where the scheme will eventually generate a financial return.

Securing funding for all stages of regeneration activity, to kick-start it and then to fund future phases of complex and long regeneration programmes, is critical for the success of schemes that can span over five, 10 and sometimes 20 years. Different organisations featured in this document have secured funding from different sources including by building homes for market rent or for sale, by securing grant funding and/or investment from the private sector and by encouraging public sector partners (eg: Transport for London) to also invest in their area.



# Poplar HARCA

**Location:** London  
**Type:** Housing association

## Organisation/area profile

Aberfeldy is located in Poplar, East London around one mile away from Canary Wharf. The site covers 8.69 hectares and is bounded on all three sides, by the A12 Blackwall Tunnel to the West and A13 East India Road to the South and by the River Lea to the East. These features have isolated the estate despite its proximity to the heart of London.

This was one of the most deprived areas in London across a range of measures including health, morbidity and employment. The housing stock largely consisted of around 200 social rented units which were interspersed with 90 leaseholders who purchased their properties under the right to buy. These properties needed high levels of maintenance and repair.

The regeneration of the area began with the creation of Poplar HARCA in 1998 as a stock transfer of around 4,500 properties from the local authority. In 2010, Poplar HARCA submitted a planning application to regenerate the Aberfeldy Estate and set up a limited liability partnership (Aberfeldy New village LLP) to deliver this regeneration plan. They have set out a 10 year programme to deliver a mixed tenure community with increased numbers of social rented homes, alongside new homes for both private renting and owner occupation.

## Objectives/outcomes achieved

The programme's main aims were to increase access to Aberfeldy by reconnecting it to the wider area and to develop a mixed community that could support a wider range of commercial, public and voluntary sector services.

In order to do this, they have focused on:

- increasing the density of housing on the estate to create a more mixed and balanced community, without reducing the number of social homes available

- drawing different types of households into the area to increase economic activity, for example by introducing a new private rented offer to attract young professionals to the area
- making significant improvements to the area's transport links. Poplar is now served by a new DLR station and a crossing has been installed on the A12, providing easy access for pedestrians both to Canary Wharf as a whole and a new Crossrail station
- improving community, health and commercial facilities. For example the project will also deliver new shops, a community centre, faith building and health centre
- making better use of green space to create better amenities for the community.

In total 297 homes, a number of retail units and the existing Aberfeldy Neighbourhood Centre will be demolished. In its place Poplar HARCA are developing up to 1,176 homes in a range of buildings between two and 10 storeys in height. This consists of:

- 151 re-provisioned social rented homes
- 20 new social rented homes
- 21 shared ownership homes
- 986 units for private homes.

The standard of housing is being improved and Poplar HARCA have seen levels of tenant satisfaction increasing, so that they are now higher than comparable locations. Tenant satisfaction ratings increased to 87 per cent in 2015, which is the organisation's highest ever rating.

## Approach to delivering regeneration

**Local leadership:** Strong local leadership has been essential to facilitate the ongoing regeneration of the area and the involvement of Poplar HARCA has been important in enabling a broad vision for the area to be developed. The transfer of properties to the organisation was designed to deliver more radical change to the area than just the limited upgrades to properties completed under the decent homes programme. The intention was always to deliver more substantial change that will last for several generations, and they have worked with partners and with residents to set out a clear vision for the area.

**Funding:** The total expenditure will be in excess of £250 million across all six phases. However there were significant up-front costs, creating potential issues with cash flow, particularly in getting the first phase of the project off the ground. In the end the majority of the upfront costs were met by Poplar HARCA. This included £10 million on planning and other pre-construction costs and almost £25 million on buying out leaseholders. Even with experience of the processes involved, the organisation expended considerable time and money on the project prior to development.

Private sales were the largest source of revenue and also represented the greatest financial risk to the project. However the first private sales marketed very well, which suggested that the area's reputation was changing and that it was becoming desirable for a range of different types of people. There have also been considerable increases in sales prices in the area as the project has progressed, which has increased revenue from sales but also the cost of buying out leaseholders. Income from private sales was also supported by sales of shared ownership, retail and parking spaces and grant funding, secured for the first two phases of affordable housing, at a rate of around £25,000 per unit. Partners, such as the Greater London Authority and Transport for London have also invested directly in the area.



# Your Housing Group

**Location:** North West  
**Type:** Housing association

## Organisation/area profile

The Anfield and Everton wards of Liverpool are situated around two miles to the North East of the city centre. The area was included in the former Housing Market Renewal (HMR) programme, which saw significant clearance and redevelopment carried out and the development of additional facilities such as a new primary school and health centre. However the end of HMR funding in 2010 led to the need for a new approach to the regeneration of the area.

A combination of different issues meant that there was a clear need for further intervention in this area. These included:

- deprivation, low incomes and child poverty. Almost one-third of the Anfield ward was ranked in the most deprived one per cent of neighbourhoods nationally in 2010. Child poverty levels were high and increasing, with some 1,550 children in poverty, equating to 43 per cent of children living in the ward. The average household income for Anfield was £25,900, compared with an average for Liverpool as a whole of £30,400
- population decline and a poor reputation, with vacancy levels rising and housing becoming derelict. A significant proportion of shops were also empty and the range of services for local residents was limited
- levels of owner occupation within the area were low relative to the average for Liverpool and England
- a relatively high proportion of the economically active population were employed in elementary occupations, such as labourers and domestic cleaners. A very high proportion of residents, in excess of 40 per cent, had no qualifications.

Your Housing are leading the current phase of activity which is focused on the areas of Anfield Village and Rockfield. They are working in partnership with

Liverpool City Council and Liverpool Football Club. This redevelopment is part of a wider regeneration programme, which will also deliver:

- the expansion of Liverpool Football Club's Anfield stadium
- the restoration of Stanley Park, a historic park adjacent to the area
- a new public square including new commercial and retail premises
- a proposed new hotel which will offer training opportunities to local people
- new retail premises along the High Street.

## Objectives/outcomes achieved

The overall objectives for the project are to:

- improve accommodation within the area, including developing a greater mix of property and tenure types
- ensure that existing residents can stay in the area if at all possible. This includes retaining some social rented lettings for local residents and making sure that people with local connections get access to ownership opportunities
- provide better services for existing residents, as the current provision of shops and services focuses mainly on the needs of supporters on match days
- connect the area to the growth and development within the city, particularly in the city centre.

To achieve this Your Housing is focusing on refurbishing existing stock where possible, although some new build was required where stock condition was very poor. In addition, environmental improvements are being used to improve the appearance of the area. Since 2009 they have completed 176 new build homes, of which around 30 per cent will be affordable housing.

While Liverpool City Council are also:

- bringing empty housing in the area back into use. More than 20 properties which were previously earmarked for demolition are being refurbished as part of a drive to encourage households to move back into Anfield and help kick-start the housing market in the area. Properties are sold to new residents for £1 and a grant from the council is also offered to fund improvement works
- providing grants to help owner occupiers who were living in the area before 2012 improve the frontage of their properties. This has been balanced with enforcement action to ensure that stock has been improved
- undertaking landscaping and street scene improvements throughout the area.

Most of the housing renewal and development in the area is likely to be completed during 2016, while the new main stand at the Anfield stadium is due to be completed in time for the 2016/17 football season. However other aspects of the project are likely to take several years to complete. These include the proposed commercial development and improved shopping facilities.

## Approach to delivering regeneration

**Local leadership:** Your Housing owns and manages more than 850 homes in the Anfield/Breckfield area of the city. Their local experience has been valuable in enabling them to take a holistic view of the social, economic and environmental sustainability of the project.

There have been a number of interventions in this area over several decades but when the funding environment changed in 2010 there was a need to revisit the approach to the project. Your Housing, together with the different partners involved needed to take time to consider the best approach. The aim was to deliver co-ordinated action designed to leave a long

term legacy. This would be achieved by developing a package of interventions which would support and reinforce each other, and which would ultimately make the area both socially and financially sustainable. This was based on extensive work with existing residents to understand their needs and aspirations and included the development of an Anfield neighbourhood area and spatial regeneration framework.

**Community engagement:** Gaining the support of the local community was a significant challenge. A succession of different programmes and the end of HMR had left many local people disillusioned with efforts to change the area. They felt that they were not receiving support and that their concerns were not being addressed.

It can take time to build trust and credibility with existing residents and intensive work, involving both Your Housing and Liverpool City Council, was required to create greater positivity about change in the area. Your Housing used locally based staff who understood the area and who were accessible to the community to achieve this, and ensured that they were supported by senior staff and board members who were willing to be directly involved in the area when needed.

They also prioritised the needs of existing residents through lettings policies and access to owner occupation schemes (such as the council's £1 homes). Demonstrating that local residents were benefitting from both new and improved properties helped to give the community confidence that the housing association were addressing their needs. For example, the first renovated properties were opened up to the local community to allow local residents to see what had been achieved.

Anecdotally it appears that perceptions of the area amongst local residents have been one of the first things to change and tenant satisfaction is now higher than other comparable areas.

# Plymouth Community Homes

**Location:** South West  
**Type:** Housing association

## Organisation/area profile

North Prospect is a deprived neighbourhood located two miles north of Plymouth city centre. It was built mostly after World War One, following Garden City principles and was initially seen as a desirable place to live. However due to the low quality of post-war construction, the condition of the housing stock is now very poor. The popularity of North Prospect slowly declined from the 1950s onwards and by 2001 it was recognised as an area of concentrated deprivation.

The original homes in North Prospect were mainly three-bedroom, semi-detached houses which had reached the end of their use. Most properties had substantial structural defects, extensive damp and were difficult to heat. They were expensive to live in due to heating and maintenance costs and did not meet the needs of existing residents.

The estate is owned and managed by Plymouth Community Homes (PCH), a housing organisation set up to accept stock transfer from Plymouth City Council in 2009 and tasked with leading the delivery of a £168m transformation of the neighbourhood. Before the project started:

- nearly 60 per cent of stock failed the decent homes standard
- two out of the four lower super output areas that make up North Prospect were ranked in the bottom three per cent nationally in the 2007 index of multiple deprivation
- the demographic make-up of the area was over reliant on older couples and young families. Many of the older households were looking to find smaller and more manageable properties and the younger households were often overcrowded and looking for additional space. The dominance of three-bed properties meant that the needs of both groups were poorly met
- There were high levels of long term unemployment.

## Objectives/outcomes achieved

PCH are aiming to transform the area into an area seen as a desirable place to live. This is based on the provision of affordable housing with low utility costs, high quality space and excellent local services. It is seeking to build upon and develop the residents' strong sense of community. The 10 year plan is aiming to:

- demolish 605 existing affordable and 189 owner-occupied homes to be replaced by 1,102 new homes of mixed tenure
- refurbish 300 existing affordable homes to a standard that will extend their life by a minimum of 30 years
- ensure no reduction in affordable housing while improving the range of house types
- improve use of land by increasing house density from 30 dwellings per hectare to 50 dwellings per hectare.

Increasing the area's population is a key part of the approach. Combining 'densification' with the provision of a better mix of housing types is creating space to accommodate both existing residents and additional households. New affordable homes are being built to a much higher standard than the previous stock. This includes Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4, Lifetime Homes and Secured by Design. Gardens have been designed to be appropriate to the property type whilst allowing more space for new homes and a variety of property types have been introduced, to better provide for people at different stages in their lives.

Other improvements include the delivery of a community hub, The Beacon, and significant improvements to the local park. Completed in 2014, The Beacon provides space for the local library, a Sure Start nursery, a café, community hall and meeting rooms for use by local businesses and organisations.



## Approach to delivering regeneration

**Community engagement:** PCH have invested considerable time and resources in community engagement. It was vital to demonstrate that the project was working with existing residents to improve their area and not imposing solutions. This meant demonstrating the benefits of the project and providing a clear, consistent explanation of how change will occur, which required extensive engagement with tenants at every stage of the process.

PCH found that providing easy access to named staff members was a particularly effective means of encouraging engagement. While this kind of communication takes time and can necessitate a long dialogue it has enabled PCH to avoid the need for compulsory purchases. They also worked with the local council to review lettings policies, as existing residents needed to be reassured that they would benefit from the improved accommodation.



# Staffordshire County Council

**Location:** West Midlands  
**Type:** Local authority

## Organisation/area profile

Northfield Village is located on the edge of Stafford town centre. The site was predominantly owned by Staffordshire County Council (SCC) with Stafford District Council (SDC) also owning an area of open space. Before the start of the recent regeneration project, the site contained a variety of different services. These included:

- a disused school building
- four houses
- archives and storage warehouses
- a learning disability care home
- a day centre for adults with learning disabilities
- a residential care home for older people
- a day centre for people with mental health needs
- facilities for charities working with people with physical disabilities.

There was a clear need to update the services on this site. All of the buildings needed to be brought up to modern standards as they were not delivering the outcomes required. For example, the care homes struggled to meet the required statutory standards due to their layout (e.g. lack of en-suite bathrooms) and services for people with physical disabilities were being delivered from portacabins. Many of the buildings had reached the end of their expected life and would have been expensive to modernise. Areas of the site had become semi-derelict and were attracting fly-tipping.

SCC has developed a strategy for adult social care across all eight of the boroughs in the county and this site has now been redeveloped as part of a wider plan to improve service provision across the county. It is a mixed use development that brings together a range of accommodation, community and care facilities on one site. These include general needs housing, Extra Care

housing and specialised accommodation for dementia sufferers and people with learning disabilities).

## Objectives/outcomes achieved

The project has only recently been completed and Northfield Village now features:

- 80 Extra Care apartments for over 55s
- a specialised dementia care facility with 59 en-suite bedrooms. These are suitable for a range of ages and stages of dementia. A dementia resource hub modelled on a 1950's internal street scene provides additional services for both residents and people living in the community
- a health centre with a GP surgery and pharmacy
- a community hub which incorporates a range of public spaces including café, restaurant and bar, hairdressers, shop and community rooms. This building also provides accommodation for the occupational health services and site management
- eight units of supported housing for people with learning disabilities based on the Extra Care model
- 22 units of affordable general needs housing
- 12 units of courtyard housing providing a secure environment for people with specific needs
- a woodchip Energy Centre providing the site with heating and hot water.
- outdoor community spaces and a public realm which links the site to the existing community. This has made the site a new focal point for the local community.

All of the housing elements of the scheme were funded, developed and are owned by Wrekin Housing Trust.

The main strength of this project is the mixed-use approach which is delivering better outcomes than

would have been possible with schemes on different sites. Evidence of these outcomes is still emerging, but should include:

- better quality accommodation for a range of vulnerable people
- improved support for independent living. In particular there has been a significant benefit for people with early onset dementia who can receive low level support from the specialist dementia unit on site
- improved health and wellbeing. For example the better integration of housing and healthcare services (e.g. GP, pharmacy) has increased access to services and reduced costs for providers
- better buildings for services being delivered to residents and the wider community. New community buildings provide high quality, fully accessible spaces for the provision of a variety of services and community activities. These range from private lounges to a public café and bar and have enabled residents to be more integrated into the wider community, as well as increased co-location of services (such as occupational health) to improve partnership working
- lower cost and more environmentally sustainable heating
- support for local employment, with 198 full time jobs and 10 apprenticeships being created.

## Approach to delivering regeneration

**Local leadership:** The project emerged from SCC's wider strategic approach to meeting the needs of their community. Their review of adult social care services combined an assessment of the needs of the community with existing services and land assets. A needs analysis investigated the changing profile of the community, whether services could respond to current and future demand and identified any gaps. The challenge of meeting the needs of an ageing

population was one of the major issues to emerge and this process created a clear goal for the project, while still allowing flexibility on how and where it was delivered.

The project was delivered by a number of organisations working in partnership, including both the county and district councils, the Wrekin Housing Group, the NHS and Browning Street Medical Practice. Creating strong partnerships was a crucial but time-consuming part of the process, which started with agreeing a shared vision for the project.

**Funding:** A further benefit of partnership working was that it enabled investment from multiple sources to be used to create a 'cocktail' of funding, to maximise the range of outcomes which could be achieved from all available resources. The overall costs for Northfield Village were £26.6 million. However this is part of a wider investment programme across the county to which SCC has contributed in excess of £40 million capital, along with land. Inputs from grants and project partners have increased this overall investment in the wider programme to over £200 million.



# Sheffield Housing Company

**Location:** Yorkshire and Humber  
**Type:** Local housing company

## Organisation/area profile

Sheffield Housing Company (SHC) started as part of a Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) pilot to consider the possible benefits of local housing companies. In this model the local authority 'invests' land in the new company and the private sector provides house building expertise and financial investment that matches the value of that land. The company is jointly owned, with Sheffield City Council (50 per cent), Keepmoat and Great Places (50 per cent) being the shareholders. A number of local authorities expressed an interest in this approach but SHC is one of only two developed so far.

The intention is for SHC to build 2,300 new homes in seven neighbourhoods, over 15 years in order to deliver regeneration within the city. These neighbourhoods are predominantly former HMR areas that have been identified as having failing housing markets. They typically have unbalanced housing markets, with not enough choice available to residents and as a result are affected by low demand and under-investment in the local economy. Many perform poorly, both in comparison to the rest of the city and nationally, on the index of multiple deprivation.

For example Norfolk Park represents one of the largest areas for regeneration in Sheffield. It is situated one mile south-east of the city centre and was built in the 1960s. By the 1980s the area was showing signs of decline. The poor condition of some housing stock, crime and unemployment rates meant that demand for housing on Norfolk Park was low. In 1995 the area received £20m of regeneration funding to address these issues. The unpopular tower blocks and maisonettes were demolished. More popular houses which were in better condition were refurbished and in 2000 a substantial consultation led to the development of a masterplan for the area, and as a result significant new housing development over a range of tenures setting the context for further investment.

SHC is aiming to revive the housing market in these areas through the provision of high quality homes,

predominantly for open market sale but including some affordable housing for rent and shared ownership, and also by using and improving existing infrastructure.

## Objectives/outcomes achieved

Two major objectives are to improve the mix of homes for different tenures available and to attract more investment in to the areas. For example, Norfolk Park already had high levels of social rented stock and so the housing company has focused on developing homes for sale on the open market.

To date, local residents make up the majority (79 per cent) of SHC buyers, with 27 per cent moving less than two miles and 52 per cent moving between three and five miles. Most of these households are first time buyers who had previously been renters. This suggests that there was local demand for owner occupation but there were a lack of properties to fulfil this demand.

In total SHC has built 287 homes, out of a total of 293 which are planned in phase 1. Of the 293:

- 40 are affordable rent properties
- 30 have been acquired by Sheffield City Council for social rent
- 223 will be available for open market sale.

Phase 2 is now agreed, with development already underway on two sites in Parson Cross and Fir Vale. Phase 2 will deliver a further 478 properties, of which around 50 will be for affordable rent or low cost home ownership (shared ownership or starter homes). The project is delivering homes to a higher standard than most similar local developments. SHC homes are significantly larger than the average for Yorkshire and exceed the technical space standards proposed by the government in 2015. This means that the homes are between 10 to 15 per cent larger than typical properties being delivered by private house builders.

Training, local employment and apprenticeships are also central to the SHC's build programme delivering 31 new apprentice places on Phase 1, 27 new jobs created and 42 per cent of operatives on site being drawn from the Sheffield City Region.

## Approach to delivering regeneration

**Local leadership:** SHC is trying to stimulate house building and regeneration in areas where the traditional market is not functioning. Many of the sites are in areas which would not be developed if it weren't for the local housing company approach, a number had been vacant for many years. Private housebuilders are not currently looking to develop in most of these areas and some of the sites involved are more attractive to investors than others.

The local housing company approach has allowed the council to package sites into phases in order to aggregate viable and non-viable sites and deliver regeneration in areas which would otherwise not be viable. The fact that much of the development is focused on council owned land also gives them some control over how the development occurs (phasing, speed etc) and they are able to exert greater control over the type of development which occurs than would be the case on a purely private development.

The involvement of the City Council also means that investment by SHC can be co-ordinated with other changes in the Neighbourhood. This has led to the improvement of local parks, highways and education facilities and the project is co-ordinating with a citywide street works programme which is designed to create significant change in the visual streetscapes of these areas

**Funding:** Sheffield City Council provided land at market value but with payment deferred until the last phase is completed. This helps to ease potential issues with cash flow. Upfront development finance for phase 1 was also provided by Keepmoat and some grant was also secured via the HCA affordable housing programme for Great Places to deliver the 40 affordable homes (around 10 per cent of the stock). Borrowing

for phase 1 was provided through a revolving development loan of £3 million. This was provided by the private sector partner at an interest rate of seven per cent which is available throughout the whole of the phase.

Agreement has been reached with the HCA to provide development finance on Phase 2 under the Builders Finance Fund in addition to that already secured from Sheffield City Council under the Local Growth Fund and supported by balance funding from Keepmoat, the private sector partner. Additional monies have also been committed via the HCA affordable housing programme for Great Places.





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